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The Evans & Reeves Grapevine

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Date to Remember

PIGMY PALM

The not so rare but infrequently seen **Pigmy Date Palm**, *Phoenix Roebelenii* (P. Loureiri), is a most beautiful ornamental deserving of far wider use than it receives locally. The adjective "elegant," a term commonly employed in horticultural description is most appropriate as applied to this little palm from the Nam Ou River Valley in Laos, Indo-China, a region much in our minds lately for reasons far less pleasant than horticulture.

Phoenix Roebelenii was regularly exported to Europe in the form of seed many many years ago and has long been a favorite for conservatory culture where ever that art is practiced around the world. Several of the early descriptions of this palm leave the impression that its mature height is about two feet, which is selling it a bit short, for Southern California at

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In order that our readers may make their gardening plans with greater perspective and for a longer time, the *Grapevine* henceforth will appear Bimonthly.

It's Time For . . .

TROPICALS including Hibiscus, Pelargoniums and other long-blooming perennials, summer annuals, and summer-flowering shrubs. Now is the last of spring bloom, the first of summer. Gardens are at their peak. Come in and select full-blown what somehow you forgot to plant. As we have said before, the only way to achieve an ever-blooming garden is to add a little each month, subtracting at the same time certain subjects you've tried and have found are not for you.

Those wonderful tropical-looking things you've been wanting all winter and spring are ready to get into warm moist earth right NOW—green ribbed **Bananas**, five gallon, \$4.50; oak-leaf **Papaya**, \$5; wide-spreading **Gunnera**, \$5; and so on. Every time you come in there's something new. And never have we had better full-bloom **Hibiscus** so early in the season—shell pink Bride, yellow and bronze Crown of Bohemia, double Red Monarch, brilliant yellow, red-centered Haleakala, and others too well-known to mention, all \$4.

Never too, have we had such **Ceanothus Sierra Blue**, one tall-growing California lilac well-adapted to average garden conditions, and oh! such a **WONDERFUL BLUE**; in full bloom, five gallon, \$5; **Ice-plants** both in cans and flats are running the usual gay gamut of colors—yellows, pinks, purples, crimson and that exquisite fragrant orchid-colored one called Mitzi; one gallons, 65 cents to 85 cents.

Pelargoniums are their usual late-May riot. We call your attention particularly to Ventura, pale orchid with deeper eye; Santa Monica, light pink; the incomparable white, Grace Armstrong; bright pink to red multicolor, Azalea; the pastel pattern of Daisy Banks; all 85 cents and \$1.50. Remember that Martha Washingtons don't need full sun, nor do they require special fertilizers. They just want water, food and frequent pruning. Cut generously for the house.

Among the evergreen perennials none is more cheerful, ever-blooming and fragrant than the old-

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It's Time For . . .

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fashioned light-lavender **Heliotrope**, 95 cents, far easier and more fragrant than the better-known Black Prince. Other perennials, of which we have the largest and best selection ever, include **DWARF WHITE** summer-blooming cushion **Mums**; **Gailardia Sun Gold** (all lemon yellow); numerous varieties of **Campanula** including the tall blue *C. primulaefolia*; dwarf white **Michelmas Daisy**; **Silver Ribbon Grass**, ten inches; blue and white **Platycodon**; **Salvia pitcheri** (tall, bright blue, late summer); **Santa Barbara Daisy** (*Erigeron Karwins Kianus*)—the ever-blooming pink and white groundcover; yellow **Geum**, and a new dwarf **Shasta Daisy** called **White Swan**, eight to ten inches. All 85 cents to 95 cents each in one gallon cans.

SUMMER AND SMOKE

Purple Smoke Bush is *Continus coggygia atropurpureus*, a European native which bids to become one of California's most distinguished deciduous shrubs. It's the foliage that amazes—budding deep red in February—March, opening airily in early April to an iridescent plum purple, three-inch oval leaves of a hue unmatched in any other plant. With early summer the purple Smoke Bush pales slightly to a smokier tone and hangs out lacy much-branched eight-inch panicles of incredibly delicate flowers fringed with long deep purple hairs further emphasizing the illusion of smoke. As cut material for the house Smoke Bush is incomparable.

Hardy in almost any climate (a fine present for a friend in the east), this out-of-the-ordinary ornamental which should achieve six feet by six feet in two years, is at long last available in some quantity, well-established in five gallon cans, \$7.50. These plants were personally selected by one of our salesmen last summer at the Royal Moerheim Nurseries in Holland. Smoke Bush (also known *Rhus continus atropurpurea*) prefers well-drained soil and not too much fertilizer.

Summer annuals are not new but some are different from those of the past. **Zinnias** in separate colors include the new flame Blaze. Recent **Petunias** include single Celestial Rose; salmon Ballerina; and the giant, fringed, white La Paloma. Flat stock 40 cents to 75 cents a dozen. And don't forget **Fuchsias**. The new plants will soon be coming into bloom and you will discover a great variety of revived old favorites as well as the new strains, 60 cents to \$1. P.E.C.

On March 10, Milo Armitage died as a result of coronary thrombosis.

Milo Armitage came to Evans and Reeves in 1944, when, seriously ill as a result of a World War I gassing, he was advised by doctors to exchange his banking career for a vocation which would keep him outdoors. He substituted his avocation, horticulture, and joined our staff as a salesman.

Born in Ontario, California, in 1898, he moved with his parents to Canada in 1906. After his service in the Canadian Field Artillery, he returned to California where he lived in Santa Monica with his wife and son.

His friends were legion; his business associates at the nursery and bank, his church contacts (he was an active member of St. Augustine's Episcopal church), and his customers feel a personal loss. His myriad friends are his memorial.

FOUR OF A KIND

Current craze for Hawaiian **Tree Ferns**, calculated to convert Southern California into a rain forest, has brought increased interest in the many varieties of tree ferns offered by Evans and Reeves. **Cibotium Chamissoi**, the Hawaiian fern with the luxuriant high-arching fronds gives evidence of acclimating itself here, and is generally suited to any area where **Fuchsias** flourish. (A handsome combination for a moist, shady location, incidentally.)

Other tree ferns, longer in our midst and perhaps more generally suited to Southern California are **Cyathea medullaris**, with the huge, dark green fronds; **Alsophila australis**, the most familiar of the tree ferns with light green, lacy fronds; and **Dicksonia antarctica** which raises a multitude of straight-ribbed fronds.

Tree ferns are greedy; a prodigal hand with moisture and food is required to keep them magnificent. (Gallons, \$2.50; five gallons, \$7.50, larger sizes to \$75.)

Pigmy Palm

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any rate. Very old specimens are to be found here and there in the Los Angeles area which may be as tall as eight or ten feet with leaves about four feet long, but three or four feet in height with two or three foot leaves is much nearer the average. The common name, "Pigmy Date Palm," seems a reasonable designation but doesn't begin to do justice to the graceful beauty of this glistening green, almost fern-like little tree.

In general appearance our subject looks like a common date palm might through the wrong end of a telescope; *P. Roebelenii* has the same rough trunk, recurving fronds and flower clusters as its Canary Island cousin but all in miniature and with a little extra delicacy thrown in.

Rich soil and partial shade are recommended to bring out the best in this palm which can become a rewarding specimen whether planted directly in the garden, tubbed in the patio, or potted for the conservatory. It's slow rate of growth means that plants are somewhat expensive or let us rather say, valuable; adolescent pigmies from \$7.50 to \$15. M.E.

Tub Hub-Bub

Evans and Reeves Nurseries have added to their already extensive stock of plant containers, a line of new (and unused), hand-made Japanese tubs, of the variety used to ship foodstuff, and often reused as plant containers. Ranging in size from five to 13 inches in diameter, these handsome and popular tubs (useful as household containers for mail, magazines, waste-paper, etc. as well as indoor or outdoor plant containers) can be used as they come or can be lacquered or painted to match any decor. (Five-inch, 95 cents; seven-inch, \$1.75; eight-inch, \$2.50; ten-inch, \$3.25; 13-inch, \$3.75.)

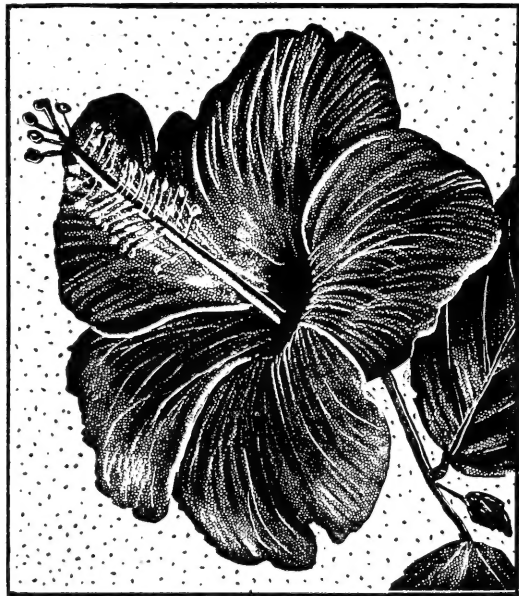
Hugh Evans

Having surveyed the gardening scene now for many years I am more and more convinced that we do not accord to the gardening profession the measure of dignity and respect to which it is entitled; not that we should regard some man who comes and mows the lawn and clips a hedge as a gardener, too often he is a dangerous character armed with a pair of lethal shears. But the real gardener with a love for plants, a knowledge of their habits and requirements, one who has acquired his art through years of study and observation is an entirely different person to the peripatetic lawn-mower. He is almost always an interesting character from whose conversation one can derive both pleasure and profit. It is to be hoped the breed is not dying out although it is disconcerting to reflect that the real skilled gardeners of today are for the most part elderly men, and it is difficult to see whence the next crop is coming.

In the old country and in the East too, the head gardener is a man of consequence deferred to by everyone, young and old, a man who has a definite place and prestige in the community and countryside. As a boy growing up in England, I had a wholesome awe of some of our friends' gardeners. Unhappily, owing to the insanity raging in the world in recent years with the consequent ruin and devastation, many large estates and fine gardens have been liquidated in a mournful manner, and with them a gracious and serene mode of life is disappearing too. Still we hope that "Somehow good will be the final goal of ill."

But let us make an end to these lugubrious reflections and resolve to become good gardeners in our own right, and if lack of time or physical frailty precludes that, let us try to train our possibly unskilled gardener to become a skilled one. It can be done; it is being done all the time. In every garden up and down this land or any other land a little more knowledge of the requirements of this tree or that plant and a little more attention paid to those requirements, and an unhappy plant is changed to a happy one. In every garden you visit you see some plant or plants which are doing unusually well. Aside from the genius and care of the owner, there is always some good reason for this state of affairs. Genius after all is an infinite capacity for taking pains.

Hibiscus . . . now!



*for a full season
of tropical blooms
plant our choice
Hawaiian hybrids
now.*

5 gallon - \$4